

The Rev. Michael McNamara, right, presides over a memorial service for Lt. Timothy Steele of Duxbury at the Holy Family Catholic Church in Duxbury Sunday, Sept. 4, 2011. At left is Steele's brother-in-law, Army Capt. David Maxwell. AMELIA KUNHARDT/GATEHOUSE NEWS SERVICE

LT. TIMOTHY J. STEELE

'A man of conviction'

Memorial Mass a farewell to fallen Duxbury soldier

By Kathryn Koch
kkoch@wickedlocal.com

DUXBURY – “One nation under God, indivisible, with liberty, and justice for all” were more than words to Army 1st Lt. Timothy “Tim” J. Steele.

In paying tribute to her brother, his sister Julie Maxwell said that Steele held this phrase from the Pledge of Allegiance dear to his heart and lived his life to uphold its meaning. He and his wife, Meaghan, even named their daughter “Liberty,” now 1, so dear did he hold the phrase.

“Tim was a principled young man,” she said. “He



Lt. Timothy Steele with his wife, Meaghan, at his West Point graduation.

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believed in his country, its founding ideals and its greatness."

Mourners at the memorial Mass for Steele Sunday at Holy Family Church grasped rosary beads and held American flags as Duxbury said farewell. A flag hung from the ladder of a Duxbury fire truck on the solemn afternoon.

Steele, 25, lost his life Aug. 23 while serving with the 3rd Brigade Combat Team of the 10th Mountain Division in Afghanistan. He was a 2004 graduate of Duxbury High School and 2009 graduate of West Point.

As his family shared personal photos of intimate moments, they looked back on a life dedicated to God, country and family. An overwhelming time for his wife and daughter that included his funeral and burial at West Point, N.Y., Friday kept them from Sunday's service.

When he decided to marry, Maxwell said, he married a young woman who shared his faith. Meaghan, she said, wanted everyone to know how comforted she has been by their prayers, as have all members of the Steele family. Their parents, Jack and Mary Ellen Steele, instilled the faith in him that guided his life.

"Tim's faith was the foundation for all that he did," she said.

Maxwell said Steele was the kind of man others would follow. He was respected. She said she's unable to say after her six years in the Army that she has met a better man or a better leader. He served, she said, for all of us. She said he was never afraid to make hard decisions.

"He would always choose the harder right than the easier wrong," she said.

While at West Point, Steele reflected while writing about Gettysburg on the meaning behind the playing of Taps at military funerals. Maxwell



Mourners at the memorial service for Lt. Timothy Steele of Duxbury include, from left: his sister Julie Maxwell; his niece Charlotte Maxwell; his mother Mary Ellen Steele; and father Jack Steele, at the Holy Family Catholic Church in Duxbury Sunday, Sept. 4. Timothy Steele, 25, died Aug. 23 while serving with the 3rd Brigade Combat Team of the 10th Mountain Division in Afghanistan. He leaves his wife, Meaghan, and daughter, Liberty, 1. AMELIA KUNHARDT/GATEHOUSE NEWS SERVICE

shared his wishes in his writing. He wrote, "I pray that I will be deserving of that honor and the respect that it shows."

The applause said that the answer was yes, he did.

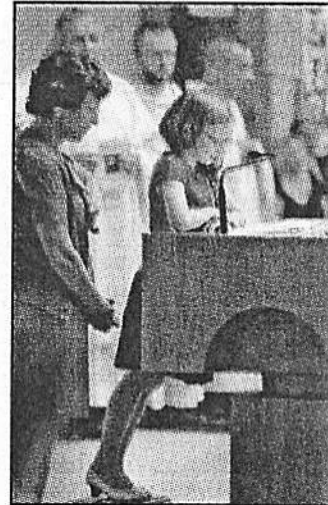
Along with family, friends and other mourners at the Mass were active military, veterans, members of the Blue Star Mothers of America and Duxbury fire and police departments, former Holy Family pastors Msgr. William Glynn and Father Bryan Parrish and other area clergy.

Father Michael McNamara, in delivering the homily at the Mass, said Steele met his wife doing God's will in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. As a member of the Knights of Columbus at West Point, Steele had volunteered to help the people of the Gulf Coast recover in its aftermath.

That was the kind of man Steele was, he said, a man of firm conviction.

"I need more Tims; I need more to stand up," he said. "I need more light against the darkness."

The Mass was an opportunity for family to remember Steele. His niece, Charlotte Maxwell, led the congregation in prayer. His sisters, Anne Marie Steele, Theresa Steele and Jessica Swenson,



Charlotte Maxwell, right, niece of Lt. Timothy Steele, reads the Prayers of the Faithful At left stands Mary Ellen Steele, mother of Timothy Steele. AMELIA KUNHARDT/GATEHOUSE NEWS SERVICE

were offertory gift bearers, and his father and brother-in-law, David Maxwell, read from the Bible.

As a tribute to Steele, two Blue Star Mothers presented the family with Blue Star banners along with prayer shawls for his parents.

Outside, the flag flew at half staff.

A fund has been established in Steele's name to aid his wife and daughter. To donate, visit

<http://www.gofundme.com/Timothy-Steele-Memorial>